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Optimizing placebo effects in medical contexts: utilizing learning theories and exploring communication strategies

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Propositions for the dissertation

Optimizing placebo effects in medical contexts: Utilizing learning theories and exploring communication strategies

1. The Placebo Paradox: Placebo treatments are inert substances that exert physiological effects (e.g. in neurobiological and psychological outcomes).
2. Immunologic processes are susceptible to placebo mechanisms, such as instructional learning and classical conditioning (this dissertation, Chapter 2-3).
3. Children with JIA often endure severe side effects during methotrexate treatment. A pharmacopsychological intervention such as pharmacological conditioning may be a suitable approach to reduce methotrexate intolerance (this dissertation, Chapter 3).
4. Placebo effects are best explained to participants by their underlying mechanisms of positive expectations and brain mechanisms involved in placebo effects (this dissertation, Chapter 4).
5. Placebo effects can be induced without the use of deception (this dissertation, Chapter 6).
6. All treatments include placebo effects to a certain extent.
7. Developing (robust) positive verbal suggestions for clinical practice are easier said than done.
8. Placebo effects can be used as a model to explain the interplay between body and mind.
9. “The best and most efficient pharmacy is within your own system” - Robert C Peale.
Learning how to ‘tap into our own pharmacy’ by means of placebo mechanisms are valuable insights and should gain more attention in clinical practice.